



Water Quality NewsFlash

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Ocean Plan – New hearing scheduled – The State Water Resources Control Board had been planning to revise four key components of the water quality standards in the Ocean Plan as part of the Triennial Review. At a Board presentation on February 3, the decision was made to reopen the process and determine if additional or alternative topics should be addressed. Consequently, the Board has issued a public notice requesting comments on the topics which should be addressed as part of the Triennial Review. The four topics currently under consideration are:

1. Indicator organisms (bacteria) – appropriate water-contact (recreation) standards
2. Fecal coliform – appropriate standards for shellfish beds
3. Provisions for *State Water Quality Protection Areas* (SWQPAs - formerly *Areas of Special Biological Significance*) – establishing discharge requirements
4. Reasonable Potential – methodology for determining whether a pollutant is likely to “cause or contribute to an exceedance of water quality standards”

The changes are controversial, in particular, the proposal for NPDES permits with special conditions for stormwater discharges into the state’s 34 coastal SWQPAs. Approximately 1400 such discharges were identified in a state survey. The Board currently interprets the Ocean Plan as banning these discharges. Written comments are due by May 12, 2004. Public notice and related information: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/plnspols/oplans/>

In related news, proposed legislation SB 512 (Figuroa) has been amended and appears intended to remove the option currently in the Public Resources Code for conditional permits for discharges of wastewater into ASBS/SWQPAs. http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/bill/sen/sb_0501-0550/sb_512_bill_20040325_amended_asm.html

Caltrans Retrofit Report – Structural BMPs assessed – The *BMP Retrofit Pilot Program - Final Report* summarizes the results of a research study of BMPs that are candidates for treating stormwater runoff from existing Caltrans facilities. The intent of the study was to evaluate the performance and life-cycle costs of 14 different types of pollutant control devices. The BMPs evaluated included: 4 types of media filters, extended detention basins, a wet basin, two types of drain inlet inserts, two versions of biofiltration, two types of infiltration devices, an oil-water separator, and continuous deflective separation. Thirty-six BMPs in all were constructed and evaluated.

Each BMP was designed, constructed, and maintained at what was “state-of-the-art” at the time the project began. The program further yielded substantial information on the technical feasibility of the BMPs as retrofits in highway and support facility settings. The project also accounted for the costs of construction and operations and maintenance under pilot program circumstances. Potential cost reduction strategies were also identified. The Appendices will be posted later: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/stormwater/>

WQ NewsFlash is a weekly update of storm water and related news for the Department. *Verify information before taking action on these bulletins.* Contact Betty Sanchez, Betty_Sanchez@dot.ca.gov (916) 653-2115, or Fred Krieger, (510) 843-7889, fkrieger@msn.com with questions or to be added or deleted from e-mail list. Posted & searchable online at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/stormwater/publicat/newsfax/index.htm>